# All trained up, ready to go: CNFJ firefighters welcome graduates

**Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs**

Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ) Regional Fire Department welcomed its 16 newest members into their ranks with a graduation ceremony and presentation of the Department of Defense (DoD) Firefighter Level II certificate at the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Fire Department April 30.

The class successfully completed an arduous two-month course to earn their spots among what CNFJ N3 Operations Officer Capt. Pat Wylly referred to as the, "best trained firefighters in the DoD."

CNFJ firefighter training is unique in that it is delivered entirely in Japanese to Japanese nationals. Although the training is conducted in Japanese, the instruction that the "rookies" receive is taken directly from the United States National Fire Protection Standards.

The recruits put in hundreds of hours of classroom and hands-on training learning how to use ladders, hoses and rescue tools. According to Ryo Iwashima, a Tokyo native, the training was challenging but manageable because of the support from his instructors and the camaraderie between the rookies.

"The training officers have helped all of us a lot," said Iwashima. "There really wasn't a hard part [of the training] because everyone helped each other."

Now that the rookies have become full-fledged members of the CNFJ Regional Fire Department, it doesn't mean that their training is over. In fact, it is just the beginning of what will be a lifetime of continuous learning in order for each individual on the team to perform the myriad duties and responsibilities that will be expected of them as CNFJ firefighters.

"In the event that there is a ever a disaster in Japan, whether on base or off base; fire, earthquake, or typhoon, you, our newest fire fighters will be our first line of response for help," said Wylly. "You will be there well before additional support can come from Navy forces or United States Forces Japan. As Japanese citizens it makes an even greater impression in terms of our bilateral support between Japan and the US. You are the ones who will protect Japan, and you are the ones who will protect and aid our families."

**(Right) Kouji Maemori receives a certificate for completing the CNFJ firefighting academy from CNFJ N3 Operations Officer Capt. Pat Wylly during the CNFJ firefighter graduation ceremony held at the CFAY Fire Department April 30. The new firefighters will be stationed aboard naval installations across Japan.**

The life of a firefighter involves the types of sacrifice and a commitment to duty that only those that serve their country are able to comprehend. Nevertheless, the young men who became professional fire fighters at the ceremony are ready to earn their stripes on the job. "It's a great opportunity to work at CNFJ Regional Fire Department," said Iwashima. "I'm looking forward to a great career."

# Holocaust atrocities remembered during special CFAY luncheon

**Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs**

Though the atrocities of the holocaust occurred more than 60 years ago, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), Yokosuka Diversity Empowerment Committee held a Holocaust Remembrance Day luncheon, April 24, to help ensure that people never forget and hopefully, prevent those types of events from happening again.

"Once a year the command makes it a point to remember the holocaust, all the people who perished in it and also the people who fought against it," said Mark Zeid, a member of the CFAY Jewish community who attended the event.

"It encourages [us] to remember where we've come from, because you can't really look forward until you know your own history," said Yokosuka Jewish Lay Leader Craig Schlesinger, who was the guest speaker at the event. "The second thing is, hopefully we turn inward and we look at ourselves and what we can do to prevent similar reoccurrences like the situations in Darfur, occurring today."

The annual event, which is recognized worldwide, is not only meant for people of the Jewish faith.

"It's geared for several people," said Zeid. "First, it's geared to the Jewish people to remember the holocaust [and] that we can never allow it to happen again. Second, it's to remind the world that this kind of hatred and discrimination exists, continuously, and everyone needs to stand up against it."

The holocaust committed by the Nazi regime during World War II opened the eyes of the world to racist acts of cruelty and genocide.

**Members of the Nile C. Kinnick Orchestra perform during a Holocaust Remembrance Day luncheon in the Sakura Room of the Officers' Club April 24. Yokosuka Diversity Empowerment Committee sponsors the annual luncheon to help ensure that people never forget the genocidal atrocities of World War II.**

Approximately 12 million people were killed during the holocaust. Of the death toll, an estimated, six million were Jewish. The others were comprised of Romanians, ethnic Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses', Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals and disabled individuals.

"Were talking about a mammoth amount of people, so were talking about [nearly] 12 million who perished in the holocaust, more than half of them were Jewish," said Schlesinger.

"People have to remember that it wasn't just the Jewish people who perished in the holocaust; five million people were Gypsies, Romanians, homosexuals [and ] all sorts of other people also were systematically eliminated," Zeid said. "So, it wasn't unique [to the Jewish people] I guess we're just the ones who want to make sure no one forgets."

A command-sponsored event used to remind the CFAY community of the heinous crimes against humanity, the luncheon is not the only tool used to educate people.

"It's not so much the luncheon that's going to make the issue… we have a lot of education efforts," said Zeid. "Even in Japan we have holocaust memorial efforts that are teaching Japanese school children about the holocaust and how to fight bigotry and hatred."

Educating about and fighting against bigotry and hatred is the most important act to help prevent it. People who look the other way and ignore it do nothing to help the problem.

"You have to remember that the holocaust, itself, existed because good people did nothing," said Zeid. "[The holocaust] failed because many good people did do something.